Rahma Elementary School
A Shared, 5-Year Old Dream Come True

Above: Dvir Warshavsky, Ebtesam Elbadour, Ahmad Albadrani; Right: Michael Biton, Auda Znun, Modi Berman, Sliman Albadrani, Mayor Tal Ohana – at the “Planting Hope” ceremony at the Rahma Elementary School site, February 14, 2020

Newly delivered classroom caravans behind Yael Agmon, January 1, 2020. Yael worked closely and tirelessly with Auda Znun to make it happen.
Rahma Elementary School –
Why & How It Began

Rahma is a Bedouin village adjacent to Yeroham and within part of Yeroham’s jurisdiction. It is comprised of 14 clusters of settlement not recognized by the government – even though the IDF moved most of the families to the Yeroham area, from further south, 55 years ago.

Rahma numbers 262 households with 1500 residents, more than 50% under the age of 18. Rahma has no infrastructures (water, sewage, electricity, garbage disposal, paved roads) or cultural institutions, sports facilities, or afterschool and leisure activities.

After 4 years of joint efforts of Bedouin and Jews, in 2011 the Ministry of Education opened a kindergarten in Rahma, so that 3-4 year olds would not have to be bused to a distant institution. Now there are 3 kindergartens in Rahma, with between 70-90 children aged 3-6.

In 2015, Auda Zanun, Chair of Rahma Residents Committee, with Yael Agmon, and the Mayors of Yeroham and Neveh Midbar Regional Council, wrote the first request to the Ministry of Education to open an elementary school in Rahma, so that the children would not have to be bused to a different tribe (Qasr A-Sir) and/or far away (Wadi Na’am).

The Local, Regional and National Planning Commissions approved the establishment of the school. Despite the approval, only legal steps taken by Bedouin and Jews from Yeroham, and close collaboration with the above Mayors and Ministry of Education and Agriculture professionals, vis a vis the IDF (the school site was labeled “training grounds” though unused) and other government bodies, enabled the Rahma School to become a reality.
Yeroham Residents Stand with their Neighbors in Rahma, June 19, 2019

From Right to Left: Seated: Auda Zanun, Chair of Rahma Residents Committee; Tal Ohana, Mayor of Yeroham; Salem Elfregat; Standing: Sliman Albadrani (behind Tal), and Nili Aharon, Member of Yeroham Municipal Council and Head of the Opposition

Some of Rahma Elders at event

Father & daughters at the event

Activities for children at event; there were three workshops including Lego-Robotics

Getting organized for activities with children at event
Signs saying: “Here will open the Rahma Elementary School on Sept. 1, 2019” before the event began, on June 19, 2019

Above: Two brothers from Yeroham with their friend Nasser Elfrijat of Rahma (in middle) at the event; Below: Some of 200 attendees at the event
Classroom caravans finally arriving at the site of the school, Dec. 31, 2019

Some months later, most of classroom caravans in place, with two bomb shelters on right near the fence – the only Negev Bedouin school with such shelters
“Planting Hope” – Jews and Bedouin plant trees at Rahma Elementary School, February 14, 2020

Michael Biton speaking, with Auda Zanun and Tal Ohana

Muhamad Zanun & Modi Berman planting a tree together

Yeroham Mayor Tal Ohana speaking

Words in Arabic & Hebrew with pictures
Planted trees in protective “sleeves”

Dvir & Ebtesam, Sliman & Zevik

Helping kids in weather-vane workshop

Robotics workshop for kids

Flower of Hope
Rahma School Opening – Sept. 1st, 2020

Sign on the fence around the school near the entrance, with logos of the Ministry of Education, Neveh Midbar and Rahma Elementary School

School Principal Sliman Elfregat addressing the audience, near the seated Auda Znun, Chair of Rahma Residents’ Committee
From Left to Right: Minister Michael Biton, Former Mayor of Yeroham, addressing the pupils; Ibrahim Elhuwashlah, Mayor of the Neveh Midbar Regional Council; Mayor of Yeroham Tal Ohana praising Auda Zanun for his vision and perseverance.

All spoke in praise of the Jewish-Bedouin collaboration that enabled the school to open, and the good neighborly relations that exist between Yeroham and Rahma, which will continue to the next generation.
Above: Yair Maayan, CEO of the Bedouin Settlement Authority, addressing the audience and promising government recognition for Rahma.

Above: Auda Zanun, Chair of Rahma Residents Committee, speaks to the children and adults.

Left: Yael Agmon speaking to the honorable guests, with classroom caravans in the background.
Rahma pupils lining up according to grade level on the new soccer field, with some of classroom caravans on the left

School bags for 270 Rahma pupils with blessings in Hebrew and Arabic and Rahma School logo, thanks to crowd-funding campaign of Jews and Bedouin

Suleiman Al-Amor, Ministry of Education Supervisor for Rahma School, speaks at September 1st ceremony
Good Neighbors Network in the Negev
Promoting Acquaintance and Joint Action between Residents of Adjacent Bedouin and Jewish Localities

Additional conferences and projects in Rahma-Yeroham, Elfur’a-Arad-Tel Arad-Biqat Qana’im, Mitzpe Ramon-Wadi Aricha-Abdeh-Wadi Hava, and more.

Today, 7 organizations, more than 30 Bedouin and Jewish activists, and over 2000 Bedouin and Jews involved in joint projects.
Thank you for your partnership with us!!!